

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN SA 00878 041818Z

62

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

PC-01 /060 W

----- 014300

R 041705Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7559

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 0878

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, ES

SUBJECT: AGRICULTURE MINISTER AND INSAFI PRESIDENT REPLACED

REF: SAN SALVADOR 0855

1. ON FEBRUARY 28 PRESIDENT MOLINA NAMED SUBSECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE LT. COL. ROBERTO ESCOBAR GARCIA TO REPLACE MAURICIO ELADIO CASTILLO AS AGRICULTURE MINISTER AND LT. COL. CARLOS EUGENIO VIDES CASANOVA TO SUCCEED MAJ AND LIC. GUILLERMO A. ROEDER AS PRESIDENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (INSAFI). ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, CASTILLO WANTED TO RETURN TO HIS CATTLE RANCH, AND ROEDER WILL BE SENT AS MILITARY ATTACHE TO MARSRYUJ WHERE HE ALSO PLANS TO WORK ON AN ADVANCED ACADEMIC DEGREE.

2. COMMENT: UNCOMFORTABLE IN A BUREAUCRATIC SETTING, CASTILLO WAS NEVER MORE THAN A FIGUREHEAD, CARETAKER MINISTER IN HIS THIRTEEN MONTHS ON THE JOB. ESCOBAR, WHO AT THE TIME OF HIS APPOINTMENT AS SUBSECRETARY IN 1974 ADMITTED TO THE PRESS THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN SA 00878 041818Z

HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT AGRICULTURE, HAS APPARENTLY LEARNED THE

ROPES AND FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES HAS RUN THE MINISTRY IN RECENT MONTHS. THOUGH REPORTEDLY NOT THE FIRST CHOICE FOR THE JOB (FORMER MINISTER ROBERTO LLACH HILL, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS RECENTLY ASKED TO TAKE IT), ESCOBAR IS INTELLIGENT AND AN ABLE ADMINISTRATOR. WITH A TECHNICALLY COMPETENT SUBSECRETARY (NONE HAS AS YET BEEN NAMED), HE WOULD PROBABLY BE A MORE THAN ADEQUATE MINISTER. NEVERTHELESS AMONG SOME MEDIUM-SIZED LAND-OWNERS AND MIDDLE CLASS PROFESSIONALS, THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER MILITARY OFFICER, ESPECIALLY IN THE TECHNICALLY COMPLEX AND POLITICALLY SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE POST, MAY NOT SIT WELL IN ADDITION, ESCOBAR'S DRINKING PROBLEM WHICH IN THE PAST REPORTEDLY CAUSED HIM OCCASIONALLY TO MISS UP TO A WEEK OF WORK AT A TIME, IS BELIEVED TO PERSIST.

3. ROEDER'S USE OF HIS INSAFI POSITION TO QUENCH HIS UNDISGUISED THIRST FOR POWER AND WEALTH EARNED HIM A FORMIDABLE ARRAY OF ENEMIES, INCLUDING FINANCIER ROBERTO HILL AND PRESIDENTIAL ECONOMIC ADVISER DR. ALVARO MAGANA. HE HAD COME TO SYMBOLIZE THE RISING OFFICIAL CORRUPTION PERCEIVED BY MANY OBSERVERS, AND HIS REAPPOINTMENT FOUR WEEKS AGO TO A NEW THREE-YEAR TERM AS INSAFI PRESIDENT CAUSED CONSIDERABLE DISMAY IN BUSINESS CIRCLES. THE UNFAVORABLE REACTION MUST HAVE BEEN OF SERIOUS DIMENSIONS SINCE IT FORCED MOLINA TO REVISE SO QUICKLY HIS RECENT EVALUATION OF ROEDER'S POLITICAL ACCEPTABILITY. FACED WITH GROWING OPPOSITION TO ROEDER, MOLINA SEEMS TO HAVE FOLLOWED HIS PATTERN OF NOT AIRING DIRTY LAUNDRY IN PUBLIC BY NOT ADDRESSING THE CORRUPTION ISSUE AND OFFERING ROEDER A FACE-SAVING WAY OUT. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH AN EMB OFF, ROEDER INSISTED THAT HE STILL HAS THE PRESIDENT'S CONFIDENCE, THAT MOLINA PROMISED HE COULD RETURN TO EL SALVADOR IN TWO YEARS FOR EVEN "BIGGER THINGS" AND THAT HE HAD CHOSEN HIS OWN SUCCESSOR. WE ARE, HOWEVER, UNAWARE OF ANY CLOSE TIE BETWEEN ROEDER AND VIDES CASANOVA. INTELLIGENT AND LOYAL TO MOLINA, VIDES HAS NO LEGAL OR FINANCIAL EXPERIENCE. HE IS WELL CONNECTED IN BOTH THE MILITARY AND PRIVATE SECTOR; HIS OLDER BROTHER, MAURICIO DANIEL, IS PRESIDENTIAL PERSONAL SECRETARY AND HIS COUSIN, BENJAMIN VIDES DENEKE, IS MANAGER OF THE FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK. VIDES CASANOVA REPORTEDLY HARBORS PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS, AND A GOOD PERFORMANCE AT INSAFI WOULD NOT HURT HIS CHANCES.

MOSKOWITZ

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SANSAA00878
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750076-0285
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750384/aaaacxsu.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 SAN SALVADOR 0855
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <09 SEP 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AGRICULTURE MINISTER AND INSAFI PRESIDENT REPLACED
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, ES, (IDES CASANOVA, CARLOS EUGENIO), (ESCOBAR GARCIA, ROBERTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006